Guidelines for Session Chairs, Discussants, and Panelists and Session Chairs

Guidelines for Session Chairs

Before the proceedings:

Session Chairs must ensure that their Session is managed properly and remains on schedule. These sessions need to be planned well in advance to be successful. In planning the session you need, as a minimum, to do the following:

- The Chairs should contact the panelists at least a few days ahead of the conference conveniently through e-mails.
- To obtain the session papers please visit our website ‘http://www.slida.lk/napsipag/download.php’ and click ‘session papers’. Then you will move to ‘http://www.slida.lk/napsipag/session_papers.php’ page and then enter your password
- For good results the chairs should organize their panels. For this the chairs should confirm that all panelists and discussants have received the papers to be presented in the panel.
- Ensure presenters load the PowerPoint presentations at least 10 minutes before the session commences.
- Obtain biographies from each of the session participants so that they can be properly introduced.
- Solicit discussion from the audience in advance of the meeting from knowledgeable individuals who will attend the meeting. You should also be prepared with questions of your own in case the discussion is slow in getting started.

Just before the session starts:

- Arrive at the session room at least 10 minutes ahead of the scheduled time of the session, introduce yourself to the floor monitor and check that the data projector and projection screen, power and extension cords, podium and microphone are in place and operating properly.
- Monitor timely distribution of session papers to all presenters and discussants.
- Please remind participants and audience members to switch off their mobile phones.
- Reminding presenters to load any required files on to the provided laptop prior to the start of the session.
• Changes in order of presentation from the published program should be avoided, if possible.
• For easier viewing dim the house lights during the showing of visuals. Turn the lights up during introductions and during discussions.

When the proceedings are in progress:

The principal challenge for a chair is to enforce time allotments. A presenter that runs over his or her allotted time is using time that belongs to another presenter or to the audience. The Chair should do the following:

• The panel begins with the chair makes a brief introduction and welcoming the audience and introduce discussant(s).
• Introduce each paper and author by name and affiliation in the order that their papers are listed in the program. By your choice, introduce all presenters or only those involved in the presentation or present in the panel room.
• Please keep the length of the introductions to under 2 minutes.
• Please monitor the time allocated to each presenter and manage the question and discussions so that the schedule is maintained and that each presenter is treated with fairness and respect.
• If you have a withdrawn paper or a no-show, please maintain the open time slot by facilitating open discussion or by allocating additional time to the papers.
• Each session runs for 90 minutes. Panelists have 10 minutes each for their presentations. Discussants have up to 5 minutes per paper, no more than 15 minutes total for all papers. Panelists are invited to briefly respond to the discussant. Then the floor is open to general discussion for 15 minutes, controlled by the chair, until time runs out.
• It is suggested that the Chair emphasizes to each presenter before the session begins that they will adhere strictly to the ‘15 minutes each’ rule.
• Monitor the clock. It is up to the Chair to use some method to inform the presenter the timing. We suggest that Chair makes a signal in "5 minutes" "2 minutes", "1 minute", and "Stop" to help alert presenters to their timing in order to signal the panelist how much time remains.
• When the discussant remarks and panelist responses are concluded, the chair opens the discussion to the entire room, moderating the discussion.
• During the session, the Panel Chair is responsible for optimizing the flow of discussion, by disallowing lengthy or irrelevant interventions.
• Session chairs should ensure that there is sufficient time for audience discussion. The Chair should not allow panelists to respond to the discussant(s) or the audience prior to opening up the session for discussion.
• Be prepared to initiate the question period if the audience is not engaged and ensure that questions and statements from the audience are short and to the point.
• When the panel is concluded, the chair thanks the panelists, the discussant(s) and the audience, and brings it to a close.
• It is important to bring a session to a close on time so that attendees can transfer in an orderly fashion.
Discussants

- Each Panel should have at least one Discussant, who should not be a paper presenter in the same session.
- Discussants should send a brief resume to the panel chair in time so he or she can make the introduction.
- As a discussant, your role is to read the papers in advance and find their commonalities, try to frame and develop a conversation from that perspective, and identify the themes and points for debate in the session.
- The discussant should provide context and criticism in the time allotted. In one minute or less, give the audience a contextual schema by placing the article within a broader literature or school of thought.
- Restrict this review to no more than 5 minutes per paper or 15 minutes for all papers.
- In the remaining time the discussant should give the author specific feedback on 3 or 4 points. These are usually a mix of things that are well done and things that need work, both in the paper and the presentation. The overall goal is to make the research stronger or the presentation more compelling.
- Discussants should focus their remarks on integrative comments rather than paper-by-paper critiques.
- Discuss how the papers contribute to the policy focus of the session, and on major issues that enhance or undermine the papers’ contributions. If you see important methodological problems in any of the papers, please send notes about this directly to the paper’s author(s) as soon as possible.
- In general, discussant remarks about each paper should deal with the major issues that enhance or undermine the paper’s contributions, reserving minor issues for direct communication with the authors.
- If the discussant is responsible for all of the papers on the panel, to the extent possible, the discussant should attempt to link them together in a common theme.
- It is helpful to the author if a copy of the comments is provided after the panel.
- Comments from the discussants will move the session into a broader conversation involving the audience regarding the policy and management implications of the research.
- Discussants should encourage the participation of the audience in the session by identifying key points worthy of further analysis and discussion.

Panelists

- Panelists are responsible for the intellectual content of the conference. They need to be responsive to the panel chair, and see their papers distributed to the rest of the panel.
- Send your brief biography to the chair in a few paragraphs.
- If the panelist has a PowerPoint presentation, this should be loaded onto the computer in time.
- All those who are presenting papers stick to their assigned time limits.
During the session, the chair will introduce the papers individually. Each presentation is allocated 10 minutes, which the chair will track. The Chair will decide and inform you the method to inform the presenter the timing. We have suggested that Chair makes a signal in "5 minutes" "2 minutes", "1 minute", and "Stop" to signal the panelist how much time remains.

When you are informed 2 minutes remain start towards the conclusion of your presentation.

After the discussant has finished making comments, the panelist has an opportunity to make a short reply or ask for clarification. It is useful for panelists to take notes of the discussant’s comments, and to obtain a copy of the discussant’s notes after the panel.

Audience

Chair’s responsibility

It is very important to solicit participation from the audience in panel sessions and to allow sufficient time for questions and answers. At your choice, you may allow for questions immediately following a presentation, or keep all discussions until after all of the presentations.

Written questions may be solicited from the audience but time must be allocated for spontaneous questions and answers. State at the start of the session how questions will be handled.

Fairly allocate time so that all aspects of the session will be open for questions and comments from the audience.

Provide a summary of the main points addressed in the sessions, lessons learned, etc. at the end of the session.

Responsibility of audience

Please do not interrupt the chair, presenters, or discussants while they are speaking. There will be time at the end to ask questions or make comments.

When you ask questions or make remarks, make them brief and to the point. Remember there are others who wish to ask questions too.

Make your question relevant. It is annoying for someone to ask a question previously asked and answered.

Conference Organising Committee

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